

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Hearing on “Examining SAMHSA’s Role in Delivering  
Services to the Severely Mentally Ill”  
May 22, 2013**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Today we are here to examine the role of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in delivering services to the severely mentally ill. In the wake of the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, this subcommittee has stepped up to examine an important question: what is the federal government doing to address serious mental illness. I commend Chairman Murphy for leading this investigation.

While the vast majority of individuals with a mental health condition are nonviolent, in March, the subcommittee learned from Dr. Tom Insel, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the important fact that treatment can reduce the risk of violent behavior fifteen-fold in persons with serious mental illness. This morning, we direct our attention to the primary federal agency responsible for supporting community-based treatment services for mental illness.

With an annual budget of approximately \$1 billion, SAMHSA’s Center for Mental Health Services could serve as a key part of the federal government’s efforts to address the tragic impacts on our society of such serious mental illnesses as major depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. This includes connecting these individuals with effective treatments at a time when 40 percent of adults with serious mental illness report not receiving any treatment. Not doing so increases the chances that the next James Holmes, the next Jared Loughner, and the next Adam Lanza will fall through the cracks.

Unfortunately, I am concerned that SAMHSA may not be directing those dollars to treat those with the most severe of mental illnesses. Further, I am also concerned about the commitment to science and the scientific process – including psychiatry – displayed by several major grant recipients. We need to be investing our dollars in the programs with the best record for treating those who have mental illnesses.

As the experts joining us today, including Doctors Torrey and Satel will share with us, SAMHSA’s programs do very little for those at the extreme end of the spectrum of mental illness, who lack awareness of their own condition, who deny that they have a disorder demanding treatment, and who see no reason to follow a medication regimen. I want to especially thank our witness, Joe Bruce, for joining us today to share his family’s tragic story.

I also welcome Administrator Hyde and look forward to hearing about her agency’s plans to address these concerns about the most vulnerable among our nation’s mentally ill.

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